

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed on November 15, 2004. Claims 1-4, 7, and 8 are cancelled. Claims 5, 9, 11-14, and 16 are amended. Claims 5, 6, and 9-29 are pending.

Claims 17-29 are allowed. The Examiner has indicated that claims 8-16 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 1-4 were previously withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement.

Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Berger (US 6,436,100).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections in view of the amended claims and the following comments.

Discussion of Amended Claims

Withdrawn claims 1-4 are cancelled.

Claim 5 is amended to include the subject matter of claim 7 and the allowable subject matter of claim 8. Claims 7 and 8 are cancelled to avoid duplication of claimed subject matter.

Claims 9, 11-14, and 16 are amended to depend from claim 5, rather than cancelled claim 8.

Claims 17-29 are allowed. Amended independent claim 5 now contains allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance.

Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between Applicants' claims and the prior art are not deemed necessary, in view of the foregoing discussion. Applicants' silence as to any of the Examiner's comments is not indicative of an acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider this application, allow each of the pending claims and to pass this application on to an early issue. If there are any remaining issues that need to be addressed in order to place this application into condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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